

- 3 -

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1, 2, 3, and 7 from further consideration herein;
amend claims 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 17; and
add new claims 19 and 20.

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 193, in which there are multiple sets of the successive stations arrayed along parallel paths and the steps (a) to (h) (g) are performed on a common metal strip which is advanced along said sets of successive stations.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 319 wherein the flexible connections are formed as multiple strips connecting the periphery of the blanks to the thin metal strip.

6. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a container end comprising the steps of:

- a) providing a strip of metal;
- b) forming blanks in the metal strip wherein each blank is connected to the strip via a plurality of integral carrying strips between the blanks and the strip;
- c) forming the blanks into cup form including an open edge;
- d) forming a dome shaped region in the open edge of the cup form;
- e) forming a neck with a closed end on the cup form above the dome shaped region;
- f) piercing the closed end of the neck top to form a neck opening having a lip;

- 4 -

- g) _____ forming a curl on the neck lip to define a pour opening;
- h) _____ forming multiple thread lug sections spaced circumferentially around said neck and protruding outward from the neck; and
- i) _____ ~~then~~ severing the formed blanks from the strip.

7. (canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein steps (a) to (f) are performed sequentially at successive stations.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of advancing the strip from one station to the next between the forming steps.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the thread lug section forming step (g) includes the steps of reforming portions of the wall of the neck into a plurality of thread lugs extending outwardly from the neck in predetermined alignment.

11. (Original) The method of claim 6, comprising the further step of providing multiple sets of successive stations arrayed along parallel paths.

12. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for forming a metal container end comprising,

means for forming a metal dome region for the upper end of such container;

means for forming a neck extending upwardly ~~of~~ from said upper end dome region and having an opening at the top of said neck defined by a lip;

means for forming a an outward curl on said neck lip completely around said opening to define a pour opening for contents of the container and to form a precise sealing surface for a closure; and

means for forming multiple thread lugs around and protruding outward from said neck by reforming portions of the wall of said neck into a plurality of circumferentially extending spaced apart lugs projecting outwardly from said neck in

- 5 -

predetermined circumferential alignment about said neck and at a predetermined spacing from said curl.

13. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for forming can ends for metal containers, comprising

means for feeding a thin strip of metal in a step-wise manner along a predetermined path,

means for forming disc shaped blanks from said thin metal strip,

means for forming the blanks into cup form,

means for forming a dome shaped region on in said cup form,

means for forming a neck on said cup form atop said dome shaped region, said neck having an open upper end surrounded by a lip,

means for forming a an outwardly extending curl on the neck lip to define a pour opening, and

means for forming circumferentially aligned multiple thread lugs spaced apart around and protruding outward from said neck at a predetermined spacing below said curl.

14. (Original) The apparatus defined in claim 13, wherein said means for forming thread lugs are supported along said predetermined path following said means for forming a neck.

15. (Original) The apparatus defined in claim 13, wherein said means for forming thread lugs operates to reform portions of the wall of said neck into a plurality of thread lugs integral with and extending outwardly from said neck.

16. (Original) The apparatus defined in claim 13, wherein there are duplicate multiple sets of forming means arrayed along parallel lanes, and
said means for feeding a thin strip of metal is constructed and arranged to advance a common metal strip incrementally along said lanes.

17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus defined in claim 13, further

- 6 -

including

a reciprocating press having a bed and ram into which said multiple sets of forming means include upper and lower cooperating tool sets mounted to define said parallel lanes of the progressive forming means and into which said means for feeding a material strip is arranged to advance the material strip incrementally when the cooperating tool sets are separated during press operation.

18. (Original) The apparatus defined in claim 13, further including means for discharging the completed container ends from the press, and means for separately discharging the remains of the material strip after separation of the ends therefrom.

19. (New) In a method of forming a container end, the steps of

- a) feeding a thin strip of metal along a predetermined path;
- b) forming disc shaped blanks from the thin strip of metal;
- c) creating integral flexible connections between the blanks and the thin strip of metal, the flexible connections extending from the outer edge of each blank to the edge of the surrounding material from which the blank is formed;
- d) forming the blanks into inverted cup forms including a closed end and an open edge attached to the strip of material
- e) forming a dome region on the closed end of each cup form;
- f) forming a neck including a cylindrical wall extending upwardly of the dome region and an opening at the top of the neck defined by a lip;
- g) forming an outwardly extending curl on the lip around the opening;
- h) forming multiple thread lugs around and protruding outward from the neck by reforming portions of the wall of the neck into a plurality of circumferentially aligned spaced apart lugs projecting outwardly from the neck in predetermined alignment about the neck and at a predetermined spacing from said curl, and

continuing with steps a) to g); whereby steps a) to g) are performed

- 7 -

sequentially at successive stations and the thin metal strip is advanced from one station to the next between the forming steps.

20. (New) The apparatus defined in claim 13, further including
inner and outer thread lug forming tools arranged to surround said neck
and also to enter within said neck, and

means for actuating said inner and outer thread lug forming tools to form
the thread lugs as integral protrusions from said neck.